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Draft country programme document***

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Summary

The Executive Director presents the draft country programme document for Bosnia and Herzegovina for discussion and comments. The Executive Board is requested to approve the aggregate indicative budget of $2,468,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $13,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific purpose contributions, for the period 2005 to 2008.

* Submission of the present document was delayed by necessary consultations with the UNICEF country office.

** E/ICEF/2004/8.

*** In accordance with Executive Board decision 2002/4 (E/ICEF/2002/8), the present document will be revised and posted on the UNICEF web site in October 2004, together with the summary results matrix. It will then be approved by the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2005.

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Basic data (2002 unless otherwise stated)	
Child population (millions, under 18 years)	0.9
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	18
Underweight (%, moderate and severe, 2000)	4
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, 2000)	31
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 2000)	87/85
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%)	99
Use of improved drinking water sources (%)	
Adult HIV prevalence rate (%, 2001)	<0.1
Child work (%, children 5-14 years old, 2000)	11
GNI per capita (US$)	1 270
One-year-olds immunized against DPT3 (%)	80
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	89

The situation of children and women

1. Almost 10 years after the end of the war which lasted from 1992 to 1995, children in Bosnia and Herzegovina are growing up with a degree of security and stability. However, the realization of children's and women's rights is impeded by the legacies of that war. With most reconstruction completed, the country is grappling with post-war political structures and socio-economic transition. The Dayton Peace Agreement established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State with limited central power, and assigned competency for social, educational, health care and fiscal policies to many levels of government and administration, including the State, the two entities of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (and its 10 Cantons), and the District of Brcko. As the country prepares for accession to the European Union, there is increasing pressure to streamline this multitude of administrative and legislative layers. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) oversees implementation of the peace agreement with the authority to exercise executive powers, including law-making.

2. The weak economy impedes the progressive realization of social and economic rights. Despite signs of renewed economic growth and reduced inflation, the gross national income per capita of $1,270 is still considerably less than the pre-war, 1990 level. Although no extreme poverty exists, some 20 per cent the population live below the poverty line, and almost 50 per cent just above it. Over 30 per cent of the poor are under 18 years of age. Poverty is closely linked to discrimination, and many poor and vulnerable children are from families who experience discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, political affiliation, status as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or returnees, their residence in rural areas, gender or disability.

3. The Common Country Assessment (CCA) identified social exclusion as a key factor preventing citizens from contributing to and fully participating in society. As underlying causes, the CCA pointed to the importance of both institutional and direct individual discrimination with its origins linked to the political and administrative fragmentation along ethnic lines, attitudes within families and communities, and the lack of an enabling environment for the participation of civil society.

4. Post-war aid and reconstruction primarily addressed the humanitarian and developmental needs of children and women, but did not effectively tackle discrimination and social exclusion. This is also reflected in the general lack of relevant statistical information disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age and social status, or information on living standards and the quality of life. The absence of up-to-date population data — the last national population census dates from 1991, prior to ethnic cleansing and displacement — renders most national-level data incomplete or inadequate.

5. Since 2000, the Government has adopted a number of frameworks and action plans (on child rights, combating human trafficking, mine action, HIV/AIDS, poverty reduction, gender equality, and primary and secondary education) relevant to the promotion of children's and women's rights. But the divergence of policies and practices resulting from the political and administrative fragmentation restricts their implementation. Basic and social services continue to be delivered in an uneven manner, a development reinforced by the absence of effective equalization mechanisms to supplement services in poorer regions with central-level funding.

6. Educational opportunities are uneven, depending on ethnicity and the wealth of Cantons. On average, primary-school enrolment rates are high at 94 per cent, but are only 33 per cent for Roma children. In rural communities, on average, children attend school for two fewer years than in urban areas. Children with special needs are often excluded. Distinct education systems in the entities promote ethnic separation. An increased number of minority returnee children are attending school following the adoption of the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Special Needs and Rights of Returnee Children in 2003. Yet, bussing of returnee children outside school catchment areas continues. The ratio of boys to girls in education is mostly equal, but girls are still discriminated against among returnees, and in rural areas face cultural and economic barriers to schooling.

7. The under-five mortality rate of 18 per 1,000 live births is close to the Western European average, but there are concerns about underreporting. One fifth of children are not fully vaccinated. Only approximately 5 per cent of infants aged 0-3 months are exclusively breastfed. Opportunities for early childhood educational development are limited, particularly in rural areas and among minority populations. Some 90 per cent of Roma have no health insurance, effectively excluding them from access to health care. Despite recent inter-entity agreements on health and education, an estimated 50 per cent of IDPs and returnees still pay for their healthcare. Discriminatory practices and prejudice in the context of HIV/AIDS, mental illness, disability and drug addiction are prevalent among communities and professionals, reducing the quality of services and discouraging access. Health workers routinely demand illegal payment prior to examination. While reported prevalence rates for HIV/AIDS are low, a hidden epidemic may be masked among vulnerable and socially stigmatized groups. Research indicates that high-risk behaviour continues among intravenous drug users, men having sex with men and sex workers.

8. Discriminatory gender roles determine the allocation of labour and distribution of property and other resources. Women make up only 37 per cent of the workforce, the lowest rate in South-Eastern Europe, despite having higher levels of education than men. Studies by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) suggest that one in five women is employed below her level of qualification. Only an estimated 4 per cent of Roma women are formally employed. Men hold virtually all leading

positions at all levels of political structures. Discrimination is also manifest in the prevalence of and inadequate response to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

9. Approximately 3,500 children live in public care, either in underfunded residential care institutions or with foster parents who receive little support to provide adequate care. Over 100 cases of child trafficking have been registered since 1999, but the real number is assumed to be much higher. Response mechanisms, however, remain ineffective. Over 1 million landmines still affect some 2,600 communities, placing an estimated 100,000 people at high risk of mine accidents and restricting access to services and development. The disadvantaged and socially excluded have no lobby and are largely invisible.

10. There is no enabling environment for participation at the community level, especially for children and young people. Families and schools struggling to provide basic needs rarely promote child participation in teaching, play and recreation. The media contribute to the perpetuation of social exclusion by conveying messages of stereotyping, segregation and distrust of those who are "different". Few media structures provide space for children and young people to discuss social issues. Public-private partnerships are hampered by outdated legal frameworks that impede service provision by NGOs and fail to ensure accountability of government institutions.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2002-2004

Key results achieved

11. The objective of the 2002-2004 country programme was to support the development of capacities of the Government and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote and fulfil children's and women's rights, with a focus on policy development, child survival and development and child protection and participation.

12. UNICEF advocacy, technical assistance and support were instrumental to the formation of the Council for Children and the adoption of the State Plan of Action for Children 2002-2010; the National Advisory Board for HIV/AIDS and the National Strategy on Prevention and Fighting against HIV/AIDS; the joint working group of government and NGO experts and professional standards for licensing and certification of teachers; the working group and strategy on juvenile justice; and the working group and action plan on child trafficking. With UNCEF support, the Government prepared its initial country reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

13. Building on the expertise of local NGOs and with support from the Government of Norway, UNICEF helped to establish multidisciplinary professional networks in four regions to strengthen responses to gender-based violence. With the support of the Canadian International Development Agency, UNICEF supported the first voluntary confidential counselling and testing services, reaching young people at high risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Together with NGO partners and social welfare ministries, UNICEF set up a comprehensive programme to strengthen child protection capacities in 15 municipalities.

14. As part of the education reform implementation, cooperation between local NGOs and ministries of education resulted in 27 per cent of primary schools adopting and implementing a child-centred teaching and learning approach that

promotes child participation. With support from the European Commission, a network of 30 local NGOs was mobilized to develop common standards, modules and methodologies for promotion of child rights and peer education, and ensured the participation of some 15,000 children in community projects and volunteer work.

15. In close cooperation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), local NGOs and donors (particularly the Government of Italy), UNICEF supported mine-risk education programmes which increased national and local capacities to manage the dangers posed by of explosive devices, including knowledge about disposal procedures. Accidents caused by inadvertent tampering are now rare and the number of landmine victims decreased from 630 in 1996 to 54 in 2003.

Lessons learned

16. The mid-term review re-emphasized the role of UNICEF in the special context of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a promoter of children's and women's rights through facilitating and mediating between the various levels of government and civil society, and bringing together stakeholders to debate and agree on strategies for implementing child rights, education reform, child protection and HIV/AIDS.

17. An evaluation of the pilot voluntary confidential counselling and testing project found that highly vulnerable groups could be reached when outreach workers were accepted by, or came from, these socially excluded groups; and that more efforts are required to reach young female injecting drug users and the most marginalized groups, and to link NGO outreach workers with mainstream government services.

18. In the area of child participation, the review established as key "lessons learned" the need to provide not only children and young people with appropriate attitudes and skills, but also adults, parents, municipal officials and teachers, and the importance of schools and the media in creating an enabling environment for participation.

The country programme, 2005-2008

Summary budget table

	(In thousands of United States dollars)		
Programme	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Total*
Policy support	688	2 400	3 088
Inclusive basic health, education and child protection services	800	5 100	5 900
Participation for good governance	640	4 500	5 140
Cross-sectoral costs	340	1 000	1 340
Total	**2 468**	**13 000**	**15 468**

Preparation process

19. The CCA and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) were developed jointly with UNDP and other key partners. Participating agencies agreed that the country programme would cover four rather than five years, given the continuing institutional transition in the country. Government counterparts, NGOs and other key stakeholders participated in the process through a series of strategy meetings and internal and national consultations. UNICEF contributed to the design and finalization of the UNDAF. The new UNICEF country programme reflects three UNDAF priority areas and is based on the analysis of the CCA. The Joint Strategy Meeting, attended by United Nations agencies and the Government in March 2004, endorsed the UNDAF and the proposed programme of cooperation.

Goals, key results and strategies

20. The goal of the country programme is to support the Government in meeting its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

21. It is specifically aimed at ensuring inclusion of all children, young people and women in the provision of basic education, health and child protection services with their increased and genuine participation. Together with government and NGO counterparts, United Nations agencies and donors, the UNICEF country programme will seek to achieve the following three major outcomes: (a) policy makers and community representatives will provide leadership in developing national policies that contribute to the realization of the rights of children, young people and women; (b) service providers and caregivers will adopt behaviours that facilitate access to education, health and child protection services for the most vulnerable; and (c) policy makers and community representatives will encourage and facilitate the meaningful participation of children and young people in their communities, including in addressing the risk of landmines.

22. UNICEF will promote the principles of non-discrimination and social inclusion in all its advocacy, programmes and assistance to policy formulation. The country programme will focus on strengthening the capacities of the Government, communities and caregivers to address social exclusion as it affects children, young people and women. Through awareness-raising, families, young people and communities will be encouraged to participate in improving delivery and coverage of services. Gender equality will be promoted as a cross-cutting strategy, linking the promotion of children's and women's rights.

23. UNICEF will sponsor research and analysis to assess the impact of transition and economic reform, including the impact of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), on social exclusion. It will also contribute to strengthening the evidence base of government policy and programmes. The country programme will enhance the institutional capacities of the Government to establish national minimum standards and mechanisms for quality assurance, monitoring and reporting.

24. At the municipal level, best practices of multisectoral coordination will be developed to improve education, health care and child protection services and to influence national policy. Support for strengthening regulatory frameworks and

developing professional capacities will contribute to better coordination among and increased accountability of service providers, including NGOs and the private sector. Support for the participation of civil will strengthen advocacy for children and women's rights and redress in case of violations. Capacity-building for NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) will enhance their skills and competencies in negotiation, articulation of demand for services and monitoring. The principle of social inclusion and non-discrimination will be strengthened through promoting responsibility of the media and by creating enabling environments for children and young people to participate in schools and communities.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

25. The new country programme directly supports national priorities as developed in national action plans and the UNDAF. The programme's outcomes have been designed within and contribute to the UNDAF priority intervention areas of: (a) strengthened accountability and responsiveness of government to pro-active citizens; (b) increased access to quality education, health and social protection; and (c) improved government and local community management of mine action.

Relationship to international priorities

26. The programme will both directly and indirectly support the Millennium Development Goals. By taking a human-rights-based approach, the programme will foster the development and adoption of standards and entitlements that will facilitate the achievement of the Goals. UNICEF will focus particularly on: (a) universal primary education; (b) reduced child mortality; (c) improved maternal health; (d) combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and (e) gender equality and empowerment of women. UNICEF will also contribute to increased protection of children from exploitation, abuse and violence, and protection of communities from the risk of mines.

27. The programme addresses the five priorities of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, focusing on child protection and HIV/AIDS prevention. As gender parity has already been achieved in education, UNICEF will concentrate on ensuring access to education for socially excluded children. Immunization "plus" activities will strengthen government capacities to provide sustainable immunization services. In early childhood development (ECD), the programme will focus on improving child-care practices among disadvantaged groups.

Programme components

Policy support

28. Bosnia and Herzegovina has legislation barring overt forms of discrimination, and in some instances has taken affirmative action. In practice, however, institutional bias and discriminatory practices are commonplace and warrant both improved policy frameworks and means for their implementation. State-level policies and laws are often developed and adopted without clear identification of priorities, responsibilities or budgets for their enforcement. There is an absence of

appropriate national standards and adequate regulatory frameworks. Monitoring and enforcement of mechanisms for redress in cases of discrimination and abuse are weak.

29. This programme component will strengthen implementation and monitoring of policies that promote children's and women's rights. UNICEF will work with the Government and NGOs to achieve the following key results: (a) policy makers and ombudspersons' offices at the level of the State, the two entities and the Cantons will coordinate and monitor policies that affect children's and women's rights; (b) government and NGO experts jointly will revise legal provisions and develop standards and guidelines for the prevention of child trafficking, domestic violence and child abuse and neglect. These guidelines will promote the care and protection of children in conflict with the law, children being fostered and adopted, and children in public care; (c) working groups on education and health reform will develop operational plans for the implementation of standards for teachers, "child-friendly" schools, peer educators and "youth-friendly" health services. Mine-risk education will be mainstreamed into curricula; and (d) the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre will assume responsibility for and implement a policy framework that integrates mine-risk education and mine victim assistance into mine action at the national and local levels.

30. UNICEF support will strengthen organizational structures at state level for the coordination and monitoring of national action plans. This will include the State Plan of Action for Children, the National Strategy on Prevention and Fighting against HIV/AIDS and the PRSP. The programme will work closely with entity and cantonal ministries to support the harmonization of regulatory frameworks and the development of minimum standards.

31. Officials from state, entity and cantonal ministries will be trained in data collection and analysis, planning, budgeting and monitoring. Technical assistance will be provided to develop methodologies, tools and indicators for assessing the impact of policies and reforms on the most vulnerable, and to undertake research on social exclusion. UNICEF support to ombudspersons' offices will strengthen responses to individual complaints of child rights violations.

32. In partnerships with OHR, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UNDP and bilateral donors, UNICEF will advocate for increased and more equitable budgetary allocations for social services across the different Cantons and municipalities. UNICEF will also support the development of regulatory frameworks to facilitate service provision by NGOs based on common standards.

33. Regular resources will be used primarily for policy advocacy and provision of technical expertise.

Inclusive basic health, education and child protection services

34. Socially disadvantaged groups do not have access to mainstream services and their needs are not respected in the practices of service providers. This programme component will strengthen the capacities and motivation of education, health and child protection services providers to reach the most vulnerable children and young people. The key results expected by the end of 2008 include: (a) all children under five years of age, including members of disadvantaged groups, will be immunized

with all basic antigens through a regular and uninterrupted supply of vaccines; (b) parents and communities in areas with low enrolment and high drop-out rates will be aware and motivated on the importance of enrolling and keeping all children in school; (c) an increased number of young people at risk of infection from HIV/AIDS (including injecting drug users and other highly vulnerable groups) will have access to "youth-friendly" government and NGO health care services; (d) ministries of health will establish parent support groups in 35 IDP camps and 40 Roma communities to improve the ECD knowledge of and practices of parents from disadvantaged IDP and Roma families; (e) government and NGO professionals responsible for child protection will be able to identify, monitor, refer and provide services for children at risk; and (f) NGOs and CSOs will have increased skills and resources to raise the awareness of children, young people, their parents and community representatives on discrimination, abuse and violence, and have the skills needed to advocate on behalf of the socially excluded.

35. UNICEF will work with local governments and NGOs to address social exclusion in social services. In selected municipalities, UNICEF will facilitate the development of participatory action plans, and will support small-scale CSO projects under the supervision of municipal management boards to address social exclusion. Governmental and NGO professionals working in the areas of education, health, social work and law enforcement will be trained in support of this initiative.

36. UNICEF will build capacities and establish systems to identify, reach out to and refer children at risk of institutionalization, victims of violence and trafficking, and children in conflict with the law. Systems for registering and dealing with complaints will be established and supported by codes of conduct for service providers. UNICEF will work closely with local school education authorities and centres for social work to assist them take responsibility for monitoring and referral of children at risk of dropping out of school.

37. To ensure "youth-friendly" services and outreach, UNICEF will support training of government and NGO health care professionals and front-line workers. To promote ECD, parental support groups will be established among vulnerable IDP and Roma communities.

38. The programme will strengthen the motivation, knowledge and skills of NGOs, CSOs, caregivers and parents to become advocates within the community on behalf of children.

39. UNICEF will cooperate with the Ministries of Health, Social Welfare and Education, local authorities in selected municipalities and local NGOs. Cooperation will continue with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and bilateral donors including the Governments of Canada, Ireland and Norway. Regular resources will be used to provide technical assistance, train professionals and to meet commitments under GAVI.

Participation for good governance

40. At a community level, the disadvantaged and socially excluded have no lobby and are largely invisible in an environment that does not promote participation, especially of children and young people on decisions that affect their lives. This programme component will promote the participation of children and young people

in their communities, schools and the media, and will promote community participation to address the risks of landmines.

41. Key results expected by 2008 are: (a) municipal governments, civil society and schools will enable an increased number of children and young people to participate meaningfully in their communities and in the monitoring of the State Plan of Action for Children; (b) 450 primary schools will institutionalize child participation; (c) media programmes will be developed with the involvement of children and broadcast media; and (d) communities in 154 areas highly affected by mines will be able to assess, develop and implement responses to risks associated with mine action. This will include mine-risk education and mine victim assistance, including on small arms and light weapons, and will reach approximately 100,000 people.

42. UNICEF will the strengthen skills, resources and networking of local NGOs to work with peer educators. Some 10,000 children and young people from different geographical and ethnic backgrounds will develop and implement joint volunteer projects to help communities and disadvantaged children.

43. The knowledge and skills of CSOs will be strengthened in providing advice on how to seek redress in individual cases of discrimination and abuse of children, young people or women. Staff of selected municipalities will be trained to better communicate with parents and young people, and to respond to their concerns. UNICEF will further enhance institutionalized participation in schools through training of school personnel, teachers and principals, provision of teaching equipment and participation of young people in monitoring the quality of service delivery. UNICEF will encourage and support major public broadcasters to produce programmes that give children and youth a voice in the media, and will train journalists and television media professionals on children's and women's rights and ethical reporting.

44. In close cooperation with UNDP and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre, UNICEF will support community action planning on mine-risk reduction and encourage local authorities and religious leaders to take a leadership role. Technical and financial support will enable local NGOs and government agencies to develop and implement risk management projects for landmines and small arms and light weapons, involving parents, children, schools and local authorities.

45. Regular resources will be used for technical assistance, support to local NGOs and the development of media capacities.

46. **Cross-sectoral costs** will cover the operational costs of the Banja Luka suboffice, the salaries of cross-sectoral staff, travel, security equipment, training costs, monitoring and evaluation, programme communication, public information for fund-raising and other purposes, and staff capacity-building.

Major partnerships

47. The country programme will be implemented in close collaboration with all United Nations agencies within the UNDAF, with government counterparts at state, entity and cantonal and municipal levels, and with international and local NGO partners. UNICEF will continue close cooperation with OSCE on education reform; with donors within the United Nations theme group on HIV/AIDS; with UNDP in integrating mine-risk education and mine victim assistance as part of mine action;

with the World Bank on social protection reform; and with UNFPA and WHO and on support to "youth-friendly" health services and immunization.

48. UNICEF will maintain close contact with funding partners, including the Governments of Canada, Ireland, Italy and Norway and the European Commission, to maximize resources and to benefit from their inputs into programme reviews and assessments. This will include facilitation of project visits for donors and National Committees for UNICEF. UNICEF will participate in coordination forums led by OHR and OSCE to that ensure children's and women's rights are prioritized in legal and judicial reforms.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

49. The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan will form the basis for annual reviews with all partners, including assessments of experience in focus municipalities and communities, and be informed in large part by field visits.

50. Key indicators of progress will be developed to assess: the implementation and coherence of national policies at different political and administrative levels; opportunities for participation by excluded groups and young people; and the degree of social inclusiveness of services. The quality of the community mine action plans that are implemented and the percentage of landmine victims receiving adequate supported will also be measured.

51. Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals will be tracked in *DevInfo*. UNICEF will support surveys including a multiple indicator cluster survey. For the mid-term review in 2006, evaluations will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of municipal action planning to address social exclusion. UNICEF will support an evaluation of UNDAF in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, government and national partners. The programme will be managed in close cooperation with the Government at state, entity and cantonal levels. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will oversee reviews and monitoring.